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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/658,740	09/10/2003	J. David Sandoval	25403	3391
7590 11/17/2009				
Jon C. Gealow 2903 N. Bayview Lane McHenry, IL 60051-9629			EXAMINER ALMATRAHI, FARIS S	
			ART UNIT 3627	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 11/17/2009	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/658,740

**Applicant(s)**

SANDOVAL, J. DAVID

**Examiner**

FARIS ALMATRAHI

**Art Unit**

3627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 June 2009.  
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.  
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.  
7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 05 March 2009 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SI.08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_  
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application  
6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Status of the Application*

1. This action is in reply to applicant communication filed on June 22, 2009.
2. Claims 20-21 are newly added.
3. Claims 1-21 are pending in this application.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. **Claims 1-8, and 10-18** are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richards et al. (US Publication No. 2003/0083920 A1) in view of Chien (US Publication No. 2002/0174038 A1).
6. Regarding claims 1-6, Richards reads on a method of administering cyclic use and movement of one or more reusable shipping structures comprising: a first party transferring one or more empty reusable shipping structures to a second party at a first value x; said second party placing materials on said one or more reusable shipping structures; and a third party acquiring said one or more reusable shipping structures from said second party at a second value y, wherein the shipping structures have

materials thereon; wherein said second value  $y$  is less than said first value  $x$  (Abstract, Figure 1, Paragraph [0014], Paragraphs [0031] – [0032], Paragraphs [0034] – [0035]); said second party valuing said one or more reusable shipping structures with materials thereon at a second value  $y$  (Figure 1, Paragraph [0025], Paragraphs [0031] – [0032]); said third party removing the materials from said one or more reusable shipping structures (Paragraphs [0025] – [0026]); and wherein a fourth party delivers said one or more reusable shipping structures with materials thereon from said second party to said third party (Figure 1, Paragraph [0025])

7. Richards fails to explicitly disclose transferring and acquiring ownership of shipping structures.
8. However, Chien discloses a method comprising transferring and acquiring ownership of shipping structures (Claim 16).
9. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the teachings of Chien in the device of Richards reference to include a method comprising transferring and acquiring ownership of shipping structures, for the advantage of providing parties with accountability and control of their own shipping containers.
10. Regarding claim 7, Richards discloses a method wherein said second party charges its internal operations a usage fee which is the difference between the first value  $x$  and the second value  $y$ , for each reusable shipping structure put in use (Paragraph [0034]).

11. Regarding claim 8, Richards discloses a method wherein the first value  $x$  is about that of new or fully reconditioned reusable shipping structure (Paragraph [0034]).
12. Regarding claim 10, Richards discloses a method wherein said one or more reusable shipping structures are pallets (Figures 3-4).
13. Regarding claim 11, Richards discloses a method wherein said pallets are wooden pallets (Paragraph [0004]).
14. Regarding claim 12, Richards discloses a method wherein said first party is selected from the group consisting of a shipping structure supplier and a shipping structure recycler (Abstract, Paragraph [0026]).
15. Regarding claim 13, Richards discloses a method wherein said second party is a product manufacturer (Paragraphs [0024] – [0025]).
16. Regarding claim 14, Richards discloses a method wherein said third party is a product distributor (Paragraph [0025]).
17. Regarding claim 15, Richards discloses a method further comprising said first party reselling one or more empty reusable shipping structures to a second party (Abstract, Paragraphs [0030] – [0031]).
18. Regarding claims 16-18, Richards discloses a method wherein said third party sells said empty reusable shipping structure for an amount about equal to the second value  $y$ , greater than the second value  $y$ , or less than the second value  $y$  (Abstract, Paragraphs [0031] – [0032]).

19. **Claims 9 and 19-21** are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richards et al. (US Publication No. 2003/0083920 A1) in view of Chien (US Publication No. 2002/0174038 A1) further in view of (EFR Executive Committee and Pallet Subcommittee "Assessing Pallet Cost in Foodservice", Efficient Foodservice Response, pp. 1-22, 2000).

20. Regarding Claims 9, 19-21, Richards fails to explicitly disclose a method comprising assigning the value of y based on a value that is less than market value and wherein the second value y is about sixty percent of the first value x.

21. However, the value of y is regarded as design choice and can obviously be any percentage of the first value x. Furthermore, EFR discloses a method wherein the second value y is about sixty percent of the first value x (Pages 10-13).

22. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the teachings of EFR in the device of Richards reference to include a method comprising assigning the value of y based on a value that is less than market value and wherein the second value y is about sixty percent of the first value x, for the advantage of providing design choice flexibility.

### ***Response to Arguments***

23. Applicant's arguments filed on March 5, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive

24. Regarding Applicant's arguments that Richards fails to show any valuation of a shipping platform by any party involved in its manufacture, use, or recycling. Examiner

respectfully disagrees. Richards shows, in paragraph [0032], the shipper paying the coordinator the amount agreed upon for the shipping platforms which reads on valuing the shipping platforms. It appears that applicant is focusing key features of invention on the valuing and revaluing of shipping structures. Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

25. Regarding Applicant's arguments that Chien fails to teach or show a method comprising transferring and acquiring ownership of shipping structures. Examiner respectfully disagrees. Applicant's disclosure of shipping structures in the instant application does not distinguish over the disclosure of bins serving as shipping structures disclosed by Chien. Examiner interprets a structure capable of holding material thereon to read on the disclosed shipping structure of the instant application.

### ***Conclusion***

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Faris Almatrahi whose telephone number is (571)270-3326. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ryan Zeender can be reached on (571) 272-6790. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Faris Almatrahi  
Examiner, Art Unit 3627

/F. Ryan Zeender/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3627